

Testimony of Tina Yeitz
President, Connecticut Association of Residential Care Homes

in regards to

Re: *S.B. No. 196 (RAISED) AN ACT PROHIBITING INVOLUNTARY DISCHARGES FROM
NURSING HOMES AND RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES TO TEMPORARY OR UNSTABLE
HOUSING.

Human Services Public Hearing, March 1, 2022

Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie, Senator Berthel, Representative Case and Members of the Human Services Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony regarding S.B. No. 196 (RAISED) AN ACT PROHIBITING INVOLUNTARY DISCHARGES FROM NURSING HOMES AND RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES TO TEMPORARY OR UNSTABLE HOUSING..

My name is Tina Yeitz and I am the President of the Connecticut Association of Residential Care Homes also known as CARCH. I am the administrator for the Eliza Huntington Home in Norwich.

I am testifying today on behalf of CARCH and our members to raise concerns about Senate Bill 196- An Act Prohibiting Involuntary Discharges from Nursing Homes and Residential Care Homes to Temporary or Unstable Housing. Let me first begin by saying no home wants to involuntarily discharge a resident. That is why we support the intent of the legislation in ensuring no resident is placed in unstable housing.

However, there are several reasons for why this may occur in either a voluntary or involuntary discharge. First, some residents are referred to residential care homes from homeless shelters so when a resident either voluntarily or involuntarily is looking to be discharged that shelter may be the housing of choice for the resident.

Additionally, homeless shelters often have access to a number of services including other affordable housing options and potential resources that individuals living there can access. Our residential care homes often do not have the same resources and because the resident is living in our home does not have access to certain supportive or temporary housing referrals.

Discharges, both involuntary and voluntary, are a challenge for many residents and homes due to the difficulty in finding an appropriate setting. As many committee members may know, residential care homes range in size from small homes with less than 10 beds to over 50 bed homes. Residents in most facilities are overwhelmingly individuals who have behavioral health diagnoses. Residential care homes offer a home-like environment with staff that provide personal care, medication administration and food and shelter. This is a non-medical model but allows residents to live independently with others in the community.

Unfortunately, there are some rare instances when residents need to be discharged either due to creating an unsafe environment in the home (examples include threatening behavior, violence or continual smoking indoors leading to potential fires) or their health

deteriorates, and they need additional supports. In such instances, the staff of the home tries to work with the resident, and when available the conservator of the individual, to find a more suitable residence. Finding a place that will accept the resident in such circumstances can be a challenge especially when the resident is not cooperative.

There are times when the conservator presents a hurdle to finding appropriate housing. The legislation, while well intended, may put the residential care home in a challenging and almost impossible position. Under current statute, residential care homes are already responsible for assisting the resident in finding appropriate placement including a discharge plan, prepared by the facility, which indicates the resident's individual needs shall accompany the patient.

The home is required to assist the resident but if they are someone being discharged involuntarily there is usually a larger issue that requires additional supports and is often disruptive to all residents that live in the residential care home. Our fundamental concern is the lack of appropriate settings to discharge residents to particularly when they are being threatening/violent and putting residents or staff in harm's way.

We appreciate the opportunity to offer testimony and would urge the committee not to move forward with the legislation.

Respectfully –

Tina Yeitz, President
Connecticut Association of Residential Care Homes